

Review of Parking Dispensation Scheme

Report of the Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendations: That

- (a) Cabinet notes the views of the HATOCs;
- (b) Cabinet approves the Parking Dispensation Scheme (including introducing charges) described in Section 4;
- (c) Cabinet agrees to a new Traffic Regulation Order being advertised in order to implement the revised Parking Dispensation Scheme.

1. Summary

Following some concerns with the introduction and operation of the existing Parking Dispensation Scheme officers have since looked at alternative options of managing Dispensations and earlier this year consulted the various Highways and Traffic Orders Committees (HATOCs) with these options.

The HATOCs have now all been consulted and this report is presented for Cabinet to consider whether to continue with a formalised County-wide Parking Dispensation Scheme, including charging arrangements and if so to give approval to advertise a new Traffic Regulation Order.

2. Background

In November 2011, the Parking Dispensation Scheme was launched in Devon to assist in the management of contractors requiring to park close to sites within existing restrictions, in particular residents parking zones. It had been established through feedback from Civil Enforcement Officers and by customers, that the previous informal approach was causing issues with abuse of restrictions and difficulty with enforcement as well as affecting the availability of parking spaces.

Previously informal schemes had been put in place by the District Councils, but these differed significantly around the County. The Parking Dispensation Scheme was therefore introduced to standardise and formalise the process.

Under the current scheme, contractors are required to give at least 24 hours notice of where they are working and the nature of their work when applying for a Dispensation Permit. The dispensation is designed for pre-planned work lasting one day or more.

Since its introduction, the scheme has operated without charge, allowing officers to monitor and assess the activities and needs of customers. In the first year of service 6,063 permit transactions were processed.

As a result of feedback on the scheme from customers and some local Members a need for a more flexible approach was identified as many contractors move between several sites each day, or have difficulties planning works in advance.

3. Consultation with HATOCs

As a result of feedback, officers drew up alternative options (see Appendix I) for the future management of parking dispensations and consulted with each of the HATOCs. The consultation sought each HATOC's views on whether there is a need for the continued management of parking dispensations permits and if so their views on the proposed improvements to the dispensation permit scheme and the introduction of charging.

Seven of the eight HATOCs wanted to see the continued management of parking dispensations and of the various permit scheme improvement options proposed each of the seven supported 'Option 4' which was the introduction of a new 'booklet of scratch cards'.

The Exeter HATOC was not in favour of continuing the management of parking dispensations.

West Devon HATOC resolved that initially there should be no charging for scratch card booklets, but was the only HATOC to request this.

North Devon HATOC and West Devon HATOC recommended that the scheme be extended to cover parking on yellow lines. However there are safety implications related to this, which would mean that each individual application would need to be assessed which would require significant resource that could not be supported by the level of charges being proposed.

The detailed results of the consultation with the HATOCs is shown in Appendix II.

4. Proposal

The view of the Exeter HATOC is important as the city is the most demanding areas in Devon for parking restrictions and enforcement. It could therefore be considered that if there is no recognition for the need for a parking dispensation scheme in this area logically there should not be any need for one elsewhere in the County. However a major catalyst for seeking to establish a formal dispensation scheme in the first place was as a result of the difficulties that Civil Enforcement Officers, including those in Exeter, were reporting.

It is important that a consistent approach is taken across the County, otherwise it can become confusing for contractors moving from one area to another with varying schemes in operation.

In view of the above it is proposed that the majority view of the HATOCs is accepted and the Council continues with managing the Parking Dispensation Scheme across the whole county and introduces the scratch card scheme to make it easier for contractors to use and for the Council to administer.

It is further proposed that in line with the view of the majority of HATOCs that the Council now introduces reasonable charges for the dispensation permits in line with its other parking products. It is therefore recommended that a scratch card would allow for 3 hours of parking and be charged at £3. These would be sold in booklets of 20 and no processing charge would be payable. The scratch card Dispensation Permit will particularly suit those contractors undertaking 'unplanned/reactive works'.

For contractors wishing to park for a number of days to carry out 'planned works' it may be more cost-effective for them to use the original Dispensation Permit scheme which is being retained. Although no charges are currently made the previously agreed cost of these permits is £5 per working day per vehicle plus a £5 processing fee per transaction. Subject to approval it is proposed that the Council now commences charging for these permits as well.

In order to revise the existing Parking Dispensation Scheme, including the charging arrangements it will be necessary to advertise a new Traffic Regulation Order which will therefore be subject to further public consultation. Any objections received will need to be considered by the Cabinet Member or if there are any significant objections, by Cabinet.

Subject to the response to the advertisement of the Traffic Regulation Order, it is currently intended that the new scheme would be operational by 1 January 2014.

Throughout the process it is intended to continually engage with the HATOCs and customers to ensure the new proposals and how they will operate are fully understood.

5. Consultations/Representations

The original service was developed as a result of feedback from Parking Managers, Civil Enforcement Officers and representations from members of the public. The most recent proposals have been discussed with and are supported by the Parking Managers.

These new proposals to develop the service further result from feedback from contractors and concerns expressed by local Members.

All HATOCs have been consulted and their views have been recorded and considered (as set out above).

Further consultation will take place as part of the formal Traffic Regulation Order.

6. Financial Considerations

There would be a cost to the Council in advertising a new Traffic Order for the revised Parking Dispensations Scheme. If a scratch card product were to be introduced, there would be costs associated with printing and posting which can be recovered by introducing the £3 charge.

7. Sustainability Considerations

The introduction of reasonable charges associated with the Parking Dispensation Scheme will enable the scheme to be more sustainable.

8. Carbon Impact Considerations

The Parking Dispensation Scheme contributes to the effective management of traffic and should therefore have a positive impact on reducing carbon.

9. Equality Considerations

The effective management of parked contractors' vehicles should enable improved accessibility which in turn will have a positive impact on equality.

10. Legal Considerations

A revised Parking Dispensation Scheme will require a new Traffic Regulation Order, which will need to be advertised and any objections considered. It would be proposed to include the current dispensations scheme in the advertisement in order that comments and objections can be considered holistically.

11. Risk Management Considerations

This proposal has been assessed and the necessary action has been taken to safeguard the Council.

There is a reputational risk to not addressing the issues raised by customers and Members.

12. Public Health Impact

There is not considered to be any public health impact.

13. Options/Alternatives

HATOCs were presented with a number of options (See Appendix I). From the responses received from the HATOCs two options were considered: -

Option 1: Cease Operation of the Parking Dispensation Scheme

Since the introduction of the Parking Dispensation Scheme a number of concerns have been raised by contractors/businesses and local Members. In addition, the administration of the scheme has required more officer time than anticipated.

Pros: Reduce officer time and costs, reduce complaints from those contractors wanting to park in restricted areas.

Cons: The cessation of the scheme would lead to a reversion to the previous system of using handwritten notes. Previously this has been open to abuse which has led to complaints from residents who have purchased Resident Parking Permits but have been unable to park.

District parking managers may not be willing or able to re-establish their own dispensation schemes to manage contractor's parking. Enforcement would be impeded and it is likely that District Partners would receive complaints due to perceived inaction.

Option 4: Addition of New Product - Booklet of Scratch Cards

A booklet of 30 scratch cards could be issued; and whilst requiring an expiry date, this could be extended beyond 12 months, for example 3 years, to allow flexibility. Contractors could purchase further booklets as required.

These would not be linked to a specific vehicle, allowing further flexibility for contractors.

Pros: Well established approach, single annual application required. One-stop enforcement by CEOs.

Risk of abuse could be managed by rationing issue, and where abuse is identified, consideration to withdrawing the service, for that contractor.

Once completed, i.e. the relevant fields scratched off, the card could not be manipulated.

Cons: As individual scratch cards will not be linked to a single vehicle registration they could be shared with those that may not have reasonable cause for use.

There will be a cost to DCC in the processing and provision of the scratch card product.

14. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

It is recommended that we build on the existing Parking Dispensation Scheme currently in place by adding a scratch card product, thus enabling greater flexibility.

It is considered that the scratch card option is the most flexible and cost effective for the contractor and is less open to abuse - once completed and placed in the windscreen of a vehicle, they cannot be manipulated. The issuing of scratch cards can be controlled throughout the year.

To avoid any abuse officers will determine suitable measures to be taken to determine the authenticity of any applicants.

The recommendation to develop the service with the introduction of scratch cards is made based upon public and Member feedback and to provide a simpler and more flexible system for contractors to use. It would also support our District Agents in the delivery of statutory parking enforcement duties, enabling efficient 'one stop' enforcement.

It is therefore recommended that this proposal be advertised as part of a new Traffic Regulation Order, with the level of charges as set out in Section 4.

In addition to the required Traffic Regulation Order advertising process, officers will seek to engage with key contractors that are likely to use the service. This will involve providing clear information on County web pages and in press releases as well as direct engagement with those contractors that have previously used the current system and whose contact details are still available.

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Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highway Management and Flood Prevention: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Strategic Director, Place: Heather Barnes

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Adrian Hale

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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Nil

ah280613cab Parking Dispensation Scheme
hk 01 280613

Options considered by HATOCs

Option 1: Cease Operation of the Parking Dispensation Scheme

Since the introduction of the Parking Dispensation Scheme a number of concerns have been raised by contractors/businesses and local Members. In addition, the administration of the scheme has required more officer time than anticipated.

Pros: Reduce officer time and costs, reduce complaints from those contractors wanting to park in restricted areas.

Cons: The cessation of the scheme would lead to a reversion to the previous system of using handwritten notes. Previously this has been open to abuse which has led to complaints from residents who have purchased Resident Parking Permits but have been unable to park.

District parking managers may not be willing or able to re-establish their own dispensation schemes to manage contractor's parking. Enforcement would be impeded and it is likely that District Partners would receive complaints due to perceived inaction.

Option 2: Retain Current System Only

Retain current Parking Dispensation Scheme with customers having to identify each site and duration specifically, and allowing 24 hours notice.

Pros: Retain management of contractors requiring parking close to sites within existing restrictions, particularly residents parking.

Cons: Lack of flexibility, continued customer complaints, risk of high administrative costs for those attending numerous sites. Officer time required and cost to DCC for this administration.

Option 3: Addition of New product - Time Clock

An annual permit valid for 6 or 12 months from date of issue, including a time clock as per the blue badge system, could be issued. This would allow a contractor to set the time of their arrival at a site and would require that they leave the site once the agreed period (suggested 3 hours) has elapsed.

This permit would be linked to a single vehicle registration.

Pros: Well established approach, single annual/bi-annual application required. One-stop enforcement by CEOs.

Cons: This would be issued once per year (or every 6 months). Once obtained the contractor is then incentivised to gain the most utility from their permit.

There is risk that a contractor may manipulate the time clock throughout the day, diminishing the ability to reliably carry out one-stop enforcement.

There will be a cost to DCC in the processing and provision of the time clock product.

Option 4: Addition of New Product - Booklet of Scratch Cards

A booklet of 30 scratch cards could be issued; and whilst requiring an expiry date, this could be extended beyond 12 months, for example 3 years, to allow flexibility. Contractors could purchase further booklets as required.

These would not be linked to a specific vehicle, allowing further flexibility for contractors.

Pros: Well established approach, single annual application required. One-stop enforcement by CEOs.

Risk of abuse could be managed by rationing issue, and where abuse is identified, consideration to withdrawing the service, for that contractor.

Once completed, i.e. the relevant fields scratched off, the card could not be manipulated.

Cons: As individual scratch cards will not be linked to a single vehicle registration they could be shared with those that may not have reasonable cause for use.

There will be a cost to DCC in the processing and provision of the scratch card product.

HATOC Resolutions

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_edh_20130326.html

- **EAST DEVON**

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Committee's views are as follows:

(a) that there is a need for management and a desire to continue developing the parking dispensation scheme, particularly in respect of its enhancement to allow greater flexibility for contractors (and landlords) who work reactively or between multiple sites in a single day;

(b) that it supports the introduction of Option 4 (Addition of New Product - Booklet of Scratch Cards);

(c) that scratch card booklets should be available at a cost equal to or more than the charge of using the on street parking;

(d) that where practical the systems used for administering the parking dispensation scheme should embrace the use of new technologies.

- **EXETER**

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_exh_20130418.html

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that this HATOC supports Option 1 Cease Operation of the Parking Dispensation Scheme subject to development of guidelines for Civil Enforcement Officers to use discretion to allow exemptions, where clearly indicated (in windscreens and with locations and telephone contact details) for certain groups, for example, contractors and landlords.

(Note in accordance with Standing Order 32 (4) Councillor Leadbetter requested that his abstention from the vote on this decision be recorded)

- **MID DEVON**

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_mdh_20130311.html

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Committee is of the view that:

(a) the development of the Parking Dispensation Scheme to allow flexibility for contractors whilst continuing to meet the needs of residents should be endorsed;

(b) there is a need to continue developing the scheme particularly in respect of enhancing greater flexibility for contractors (and landlords) who work reactively or between multiple sites in a single day and that it would recommend the Scratch Card Option 4.

- **NORTH DEVON**

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_ndh_20130319.html

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed:

(a) the development of the Parking Dispensation Scheme to allow flexibility for contractors whilst continuing to meet the needs of residents be endorsed;

(b) the HATOC supports the view that there is a need to continue developing the scheme particularly in respect of enhancing greater flexibility for contractors (and landlords) who work reactively or between multiple sites in a single day and that it would recommend the Scratch Card Option 4, as detailed in the report;

(c) that this Committee also requests that further consideration be given to the following:

(i) an alternative method by use of mobile Text Messaging (rather than the Scratch Card method);

(ii) an option to allow a dispensation to enable contractors parking on restricted parking areas (such a single yellow) in the vicinity of the work place; and

(iii) operating a pilot of a revised Dispensation Scheme when approved (for 12 months for example) before roll out to the whole County;

(d) that a progress report be submitted to this Committee approximately 12 months after implementation of a revised Parking Dispensation Scheme.

- **SOUTH HAMS**

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_shh_20130419.html

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed:

(a) that the development of the Parking Dispensation Scheme to allow flexibility for contractors whilst continuing to meet the needs of residents be endorsed;

(b) that this Committee supports the view that there is a need to continue developing the scheme particularly in respect of enhancing greater flexibility for contractors (and landlords) who work reactively or between multiple sites in a single day and that it would recommend the Scratch Card Option 4, as detailed in the report.

- **TEIGNBRIDGE**

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_tbh_20130314.html

RESOLVED

(a) that Teignbridge HATOC recommend to Cabinet the introduction of scratch cards (Option 4 of the report) on a reasonable charge basis (from the outset);

(b) that the development of the Parking Dispensation Scheme to allow flexibility for contractors whilst continuing to meet the needs of residents be noted;

(c) that the need for management and a desire to continue developing the scheme particularly in respect of enhancing the scheme to allow greater flexibility for contractors (and landlords) who work reactively or between multiple sites in a single day be noted.

(NB: In accordance with Standing Order 32(4) Councillor Clarence requested that his vote against the proposed charging in (a) above be recorded).

- **TORRIDGE**

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_trh_20130304.html

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed:

(a) the development of the Parking Dispensation Scheme to allow flexibility for contractors whilst continuing to meet the needs of residents be endorsed;

(b) the HATOC supports the view that there is a need to continue developing the scheme particularly in respect of enhancing greater flexibility for contractors (and landlords) who work reactively or between multiple sites in a single day and that it would recommend the Scratch Card Option 4, as detailed in the report and also requests that consideration be given to a fee of 1 per visit for example and to the recording of car registration numbers within the vetting application process.

- **WEST DEVON**

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_wdh_20130327.html

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Committee s views are as follows:

(a) that there is a need for management and a desire to continue developing the parking dispensation scheme, particularly in respect of its enhancement to allow greater flexibility for contractors (and landlords) who work reactively or between multiple sites in a single day;

(b) that it supports the introduction of Option 4 (Addition of New Product - Booklet of Scratch Cards);

(c) that initially no charge should be made for scratch card booklets and that this should also apply to dispensations for parking on single and double yellow lines, although this should be subject to review at a later date;

(d) that where practical the systems used for administering the parking dispensation scheme should embrace the use of new technologies.